IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

In re Application of	:	Richard Douglas Kemp
Application No.	:	10/603,207
Filing Date	:	25 June 2003
Art Unit	:	2166
Title	:	Electronic Management and Distribution of Legal Information
Attorney Docket No.	:	336001-2024.1

Mail Stop Appeal Brief—Patents
Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees necessary to continue prosecution in this matter or to credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

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REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in this appeal is Bloomberg Finance, L.P., the assignee of record.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences in connection with this matter.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1–12, 16–24, 30, 32–35, and 56–69 are pending and stand rejected. The applicant now appeals the rejection of claims 1–12, 16–24, 30, 32–35, and 56–69.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments are pending.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The application and claims relate to methods and systems for providing information over a communications network (p. 1, lines 17–18). In particular, the application discloses methods and systems for computerized research and monitoring of information about one or more legal and other professional subjects (p. 1, lines 18–20). The information may be related to one or more topics and may be categorized according to type such that, when presented, the information may be tabulated by type (p. 2, lines 7–15).

Thus according to an embodiment of the invention, a user may enter a request for information at a user terminal (p. 18, lines 20–24). One or more computers may receive the request and, in response, may retrieve responsive information from, *e.g.*, a database (p. 19, lines 27–29). The retrieved information may then be provided for display on a display device associated with the user display (p. 19, line 30–p. 20, line 6). The displayed information may be tabulated by type of information (p. 3, lines 3–12) and may, according to an embodiment of the invention, be selectable such that selection of an item of information causes a request to be made for display on the display device of content associated with the selected item (p. 4, line 30–p. 5, line 7).

Independent claim 1 describes a system for providing legal information comprising associated items of legal information and content (p. 20, lines 7–13). The system comprises at least one computer (Fig. 1, #120) and a plurality of user terminals (Fig. 1, #106) which communicate over a network (p. 11, lines 3–14). The system also comprises at least one database associated with the at least one computer (p. 11, lines 9–14; Fig. 1, #121), which stores the legal information in association with a plurality of legal topics and a plurality of types of legal information (p. 16, lines 18–27), and a computer readable medium or media (p. 32, lines 8–18).

The medium (or media) stores programming that causes the at least one computer to access within the at least one database a plurality of items of legal information responsive to a request received from a user terminal, where each item of legal information is associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each type tag identifies a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of legal information, and each type tag identifies a type of legal information corresponding to the associated item of legal information. (p. 16, lines 18–27.) The programming causes each item of legal information associated with the accessed information to be provided for display on a display device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received (p. 9, lines 9–16). The presented information is automatically tabulated by the respective type tags and is configured to be selectable at the user terminal (*id.*; p. 5, lines 14–19). Selection provides a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item (*id.*).

Independent claim 30 describes a method of processing legal information (Figs. 3a, 3b). The method comprises assigning to each of a plurality of documents, each of which comprises legal information relating to a plurality of legal topics, at least one identifier associated with (a) at least one of the legal topics and (b) at least one of a plurality of types of legal information (p. 18, lines 5–12; Fig. 3a, #304.). The method also comprises formatting the documents according to a protocol, storing the formatted documents in at least one database (p. 18, lines 13–16; Fig. 3a, #312), using identifiers associated with the stored documents to identify documents within the at least one database responsive to a request received from a user terminal for information related to at least one of the plurality of legal topics (p. 9, lines 9–15), and causing legal

information associated with the identified documents to be provided for display on the display device, automatically tabulated by type according to the identifiers associated with the respective identified documents (p. 9, lines 15–16).

Independent claim 58 describes a method for providing legal information (Figs. 3a, 3b), which comprises associated items of legal information and content (p. 20, lines 7–13), in a system that comprises at least one computer (Fig. 1, #120), a plurality of user terminals (Fig. 1, #106) which communicate over a network (p. 11, lines 3–14), and at least one database, associated with the at least one computer (p. 11, lines 9–14; Fig. 1, #121), which stores a plurality of items of legal information, where each item of legal information is associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each topic tag identifies a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of legal information, and each type tag identifies a type of legal information corresponding to the associated item of legal information (p. 16, lines 18–27). The method comprises the at least one computer accessing within the at least one database legal information responsive to a request from a user terminal and the at least one computer providing for display, on a display device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received, each item of legal information associated with the accessed information, automatically tabulated by the respective type tag (p. 9, lines 9–16). The displayed information is configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item (*id.*; p. 5, lines 14–19).

Independent claim 68 describes a computer program product that comprises a computer program, stored on a computer readable medium (p. 32, lines 14–18), that causes a computer system to perform a method for providing legal information (Figs. 3a, 3b). The legal information comprises associated items of legal information and content (p. 20, lines 7–13), and the computer system comprises at least one computer (Fig. 1, #120), a plurality of user terminals which communicate over a network (Fig. 1, #106), and at least one database, associated with the at least one computer (p. 11, lines 9–14; Fig. 1, #121), storing items of legal information, where each item of legal information is associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each topic tag identifies a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of

legal information, and each type tag identifies a type of legal information corresponding to the associated item of legal information (p. 11, lines 9–14; p. 16, lines 18–27; Fig. 1, #121). The method comprises the at least one computer accessing within the at least one database legal information responsive to a request from a user terminal and providing for display, on a display device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received, each item of legal information associated with the accessed information (p. 9, lines 9–15). The displayed information is automatically tabulated by the respective type tag (p. 9, lines 15–16) and configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item (*id.*; p. 5, lines 14–19).

Independent claim 69 describes a computer program product that comprises a computer program stored on a computer readable medium that causes at least one computer to perform a method of processing legal information (p. 20, lines 7–13; p. 32, lines 14–18). The method comprises assigning to each of a plurality of documents, each of which comprises legal information relating to a plurality of legal topics, at least one identifier associated with (a) at least one of the legal topics and (b) at least one of a plurality of types of legal information (p. 18, lines 5–12; Fig. 3a, #304); formatting the documents according to a protocol (p. 18, lines 9–12; Fig. 3a, #306, 308); storing the formatted documents in at least one database (p. 18, lines 13–16; Fig. 3a, #312); using identifiers associated with the stored documents to identify documents within the at least one database responsive to a request received from a user terminal for information related to at least one of the plurality of legal topics (p. 9, lines 9–15); and causing legal information associated with the identified documents to be provided for display on the display device, automatically tabulated by type according to the identifiers associated with the respective identified documents (p. 9, lines 15–16).

GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

In the final Office action of 21 January 2011 (the "Office Action"), the examiner rejects all pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0253449 by Williamson *et al.* (Office Action at 2.)

Accordingly, the question on appeal is:

> Is the examiner incorrect in rejecting all pending claims as anticipated by Williamson?

ARGUMENT

A. Williamson Fails to Anticipate Any Claim

In the Office Action, the examiner rejects all pending claims as anticipated by Williamson. As shown below, however, Williamson fails to teach or suggest all limitations of any claim. Williamson therefore fails to anticipate any claim, and the rejections are erroneous and must be reversed.

1. Claims 1, 3, 5–6, 16–24, 56–61, 63–65, and 68

Claim 1 claims a networked computer system that retrieves specified items of legal information from one or more databases and provides them for display in a specified way. Williamson fails to anticipate claim 1 because it fails to teach or suggest retrieving and displaying items of legal information that satisfy all limitations of claim 1. This may be best appreciated, however, in view of an example of an embodiment of the invention such as the specification describes.

Embodiments of the invention provide methods and systems for "providing and monitoring information over a communications network." (p. 1, lines 17–20.) Information may be selected that is related to a legal topic, such as "securities" or "corporate". (p. 3, lines 3–12.) The selection may be explicit, but it may also be automatic: for example, a user's logging in may cause an automatic request for information related to one or more previously-specified topics. (p. 18, lines 20–24.)

A server may receive the request. (Fig. 3b, #316; p. 18, lines 20–24.) In response, the server may verify the user's authorization to receive information from various databases. (p. 19, line 30 – p. 20, line 6.) The server may then transmit responsive information, if authorized, for display to the user. *Id.*

The system may allow the user to access different types of legal information, including, for example, judicial decisions, statutes, administrative rules, administrative decisions, and news. (p. 3, lines 5–9; p. 3, line 30 – p. 4, line 6.) It will be appreciated that different types of legal information may have different significance to users, however. The displayed information may therefore be tabulated according to the type of legal information. (p. 2, lines 16–24.) The scheme for classifying types of legal

information is largely or totally independent of the particular legal topic. (p. 13, lines 8–20.)

Fig. 4 depicts displayed items of legal information under the topic "securities" according to an embodiment of the invention. (p. 21, lines 22–27.) The types of the displayed items are "Administrative Action", "Recent Cases", "Current Rulemaking", "Legislative Alerts", and "Securities News". (Fig. 4; p. 22, lines 8–21 (indicating that heading "Current Following" in Fig. 4 designates items of type "Current Rulemaking").)

As depicted, the responsive items are provided as headlines or other short summaries, and, in such an embodiment, the items may be configured to be selectable. (p. 4, line 28 – p. 5, line 7.) Selection of the item may then cause additional information, related to the selected item, to be provided for display. (p. 5, lines 7–9; p. 24, lines 3–9.) For example, selection of the item "SEC Speech: Cynthia A. Glassman, June 4, 2002" under "Administrative Action" may lead to display of a summary of the speech, *e.g.*, as Fig. 6 depicts. *Id*.

Embodiments of the invention may provide information that is subject to frequent updates, changes, or both, such as legal or business news that may require prompt action. (p. 3,line 30 – p. 4, line 6.) A system according to an embodiment of the invention may continuously or periodically check the database or databases for new information that would be responsive to the original request, *e.g.*, through a process such as Fig. 3b depicts. (p. 20, lines 14–25.) When such new information is found, it may be provided for display to the user along with the previously provided responsive information. (p. 23, lines 11–18.)

Independent claim 1 is directed to a networked computer system for providing legal information. The system is programmed to access within at least one database a plurality of items of legal information that have the following properties:

- they are responsive to the request;
- they are associated with content ("A system for providing legal information comprising associated items of legal information and content");

- they are each associated with respective topic tags that identify legal topics or subtopics that are associated with the items; and
- they are each associated with respective type tags that identify types of legal information corresponding to the associated items.

The accessed items of legal information are provided for display on a display device associated with the user terminal that provided the request. As provided for display, the items of legal information are:

- automatically tabulated by the respective type tags; and
- configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display of the associated content.

As used in claim 1 and according to the specification, "items of legal information", "content", "legal topics", and "types of legal information" are mutually exclusive categories. Items of legal information may be classified separately under one or more topics and one or more types. (p. 13, lines 8–20.) Types may be the same across all topics (unlike, *e.g.*, subtopics, which may be expected to vary radically between legal topics). *Id*. Thus, an item of legal information may be associated with a legal topic, a type of legal information, or both, but it cannot *be* either of those things. A topic may not be a type, and a type may not be a topic. Similarly, as claimed, an item of legal information may be associated with content, but it is not itself content, or the request for display of the associated content would be superfluous.

Williamson discusses something entirely different. Williamson discusses an "automated system and method for drafting complex documents, particularly contracts, using an authenticated collection of clauses, outlines, and drafting-related resources." (¶ 0012.) A user can select a form clause and insert it into a word processing document that the user can then edit. (¶ 0052) The available clauses are not updated in real-time in response to, *e.g.*, breaking news, but are modifiable only by specially authorized users, such as the attorney in a law firm who is responsible for a particular client. (¶ 0048.) In contrast with the applicant's system, there is thus no reason for Williamson to provide real-time updates or current awareness information.

On examination, Williamson fails to teach or suggest items of legal information that satisfy the limitations of claim 1. Specifically, there are no items of legal information in Williamson that (1) are associated with content, topic tags, and type tags and (2) are provided for display tabulated by type and configured to be selectable so as to generate a request for the associated content.

Considering, for example, Fig. 4 of Williamson, this is a screen shot of a menu-driven clause selection module. (¶ 0022.) The depicted module is used to select individual clauses and includes a topic heading and a topic listing, the listing being divided into general topics and specific topics. (¶ 0051.) The user can select a particular clause from the specific topics. (¶ 0051.) The depicted module also includes a single selected clause and an annotation associated with that clause. (¶¶ 0053–54.)

But nothing in Fig. 4 can be the items of legal information that claim 1 claims. Taking first the displayed topics (Fig. 4, #62 in Fig. 4), they cannot fill this role at least because then nothing in Williamson would correspond to the claimed topics and topic tags. Neither the displayed clause (Fig. 4, #67) nor the associated annotation can be the items of legal information (Fig. 4, #68) because neither is selectable to cause display of associated content, and because claim 1 claims a *plurality* of items. And the displayed subtopics (Fig. 4, #63) cannot be the claimed items because they are all items of the same type of legal information, and display of items of only a single type logically cannot include tabulation of items by type.

Fig. 5 of Williamson depicts a menu-driven outline selection module, and Fig. 6 depicts a menu-driven learning module. (¶¶ 0055, 0059.) Inspection of these figures reveals they fail to depict the claimed items of legal information, for the same reasons that Fig. 4 does.

The examiner's arguments in the Office Action fail to show that Williamson teaches or suggests the claimed items of legal information. For example, in connection with "access[ing] within the at least one database a plurality of items of legal information responsive to a request received from a user terminal", the examiner cites Williamson at paragraphs 0033-35. (Office Action at 2.) The cited paragraphs discuss several different objects in a database, including outlines, clauses, terms, and educational and reference

topics. (¶ 0035.) But nothing in any of these paragraphs refers to a specific request or requests, and nothing identifies any accessed items of legal information that are responsive to such a request.

Similarly, for the claimed causing items of legal information to be provided for display, automatically tabulated by type tags and configured to be selectable to provide a request for associated content, the examiner cites Williamson at paragraphs 0051–54 and Figs. 4–6. (Office Action at 3.) But as shown above, these parts of Williamson do not teach these limitations either.

Responding to the examiner's argument is hindered by the lack of specificity in the Office Action. For example, the examiner never indicates what specific elements in Williamson are believed to correspond, respectively, to the claimed items, content, topics, and types. Instead, the examiner has cited merely ranges of paragraphs and three entire figures, giving no further detail or explanation.

If the examiner is to maintain the rejection of claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that the examiner must, at least:

- identify specific items of legal information in Williamson;
- identify specific content associated with the identified items of legal information;
- identify how those specific items of legal information are tabulated by type when provided for display; and
- identify how those specific items are selectable to cause a request for the associated content.

For the reasons given above, however, it is respectfully submitted that the examiner is unable to do so and that the rejection of claim 1 is therefore in error.

Independent claims 58 and 68 include limitations that correspond to the limitations of claim 1 discussed above, and it is therefore submitted that the rejection of this claim is similarly in error. Claims 3, 5–6, 16–24, 56–57, 59–61, and 63–65 each depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 or claim 58, and it is therefore submitted that

these claims are allowable at least because they include allowable subject matter. The Board is therefore respectfully requested to reverse the rejections of all these claims.

2. Claims 2 and 4

Claims 2 and 4 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, which has been shown above to be allowable. These claims therefore are allowable because they include allowable subject matter.

But claims 2 and 4 are separately allowable because they include limitations that specify particular types of legal information that Williamson fails to teach or suggest. Claim 2 claims:

> 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of types of legal information comprises at least *two* of: administrative action, legislative action, rulemaking, reported judicial decisions, and news.

(Emphasis added). Claim 4 is similar, but it depends from claim 3, and the list of types of legal information also includes "court filings" and "secondary materials".

Williamson certainly fails to teach or suggest more than one of the listed types of legal information, and arguably fails to teach any of them. As a system for drafting contracts (¶ 0004), Williamson does not contain—and could have no reason to contain—administrative actions, legislative actions, rulemaking, reported judicial decisions, news, or court filings.

In connection with these claims, the examiner cites Williamson at Figs. 4–6, but here, too, fails to say what features are supposed to correspond to these claims' limitations. (Office Action at 2–3.) The lack of particulars is once again a hindrance. But these figures plainly show nothing that even arguably teaches or suggests any listed type of legal information except possibly secondary materials.

Possibly the examiner believes that the clauses in the library or their associated annotations are "secondary materials" within the meaning of claim 4 (claim 2 omits this from the list of possible types of legal information), but once again the lack of particulars forces the applicant to speculate about the examiner's intent. Considering the description

of "secondary materials" in the Specification as "law journals and the like" (*see* p. 1, lines 21–28), it is not clear that such an interpretation would be correct.

Whether or not anything in Williamson could be regarded as "secondary materials", however, Williamson still fails to anticipate either claim. Claim 2 and claim 4 each say that the plurality of types of legal information comprises *two* of the listed types, and claim 2 doesn't allow "secondary materials" to be one of the two types. And it is clear that none of Figs. 4–6 depicts any other listed type.

To the contrary, Fig. 4 is a screen shot that illustrates a menu-driven clause selection module with annotations and hyperlinks; Fig. 5 is a screen shot that illustrates a menu-driven outline selection module with annotations; and Fig. 6 is a screen shot that illustrates a menu-driven learning module with annotations and hyperlinks. (¶¶ 0022–24.) Each figure depicts a window presented by Microsoft Internet Explorer. Fig. 4 includes a topic heading above a topic listing (60, 61, 62), a clause panel (65) containing a selected clause (67), and an annotations panel (66) containing an annotation (68) associated with the clause. (¶¶ 0051–54.) Fig. 5 similarly includes a topic heading (81) and listings (81, 82, 83, 84), a selected outline (88), and an associated annotation (89). (¶¶ 0055–58.) And Fig. 6 includes a topic heading (101) and listing (102, 103) and a selected topic (106). (¶¶ 0059–60.)

None of these figures depicts an administrative action, a legislative action, a notice of rulemaking, a reported judicial decision, news, or a court filing. And for this additional reason, Williamson fails to anticipate claim 2 and claim 4, and the rejection of these claims must be reversed.

3. Claims 7–9, 62, and 66–67

Claims 7–9, 62, and 66–67 each depend directly or indirectly from one of independent claims 1 and 58, which have been shown above to be allowable. Claims 7–9, 62, and 66–67 are therefore allowable at least because they include allowable subject matter.

Additionally, however, these claims are allowable because they include limitations, related to automatically updating displayed information, that Williamson fails

to teach or suggest. Taking claim 7, for example, it claims programming that causes the at least one computer to automatically access new responsive information while each item associated with the previously accessed information is displayed and to provide the new information for display together with the previously displayed items. Claim 8 is similar, but claims "automatically and periodically" accessing the database in search of new responsive information, and claim 9 claims "automatically and continuously" accessing the database for the same purpose.

Williamson fails to teach or suggest these limitations and in fact has no reason to do so. Williamson discusses a clause library useful for drafting complex agreements. (¶¶ 0032, 0035.) It does not relate to, or even discuss, frequently changing or updated information (such as news, for example). Without such frequent changes to underlying information, there would be no need for checking for updates and displaying updated information when found.

In connection with these limitations of claim 7, 8, and 9, the examiner cites Williamson at paragraphs 0036 and 0070 and at Fig. 9. (Office Action at 5–6.) Paragraph 0036 discusses annotations that may be associated with outlines, clauses, and terms. (¶ 0036.) The annotations may include hyperlinks to other resources, which may be stored locally or remotely. *Id*.

Fig. 9 of Williamson is a flow diagram that shows a routine for selecting a clause for use in drafting a legal document, and paragraph 0070 discusses the depicted routine. (¶¶ 0027, 0070.) As discussed, filtered menus and submenus of clauses may be displayed to a user. (¶ 0070.) When a user selects a menu item corresponding to a particular clause, the clause may be populated with values, and a related annotation may be displayed. *Id*. If the user then selects the clause, the selection is recorded in a journal. *Id*.

The relevance to claims 7–9 of the cited portions of Williamson is obscure. Nothing in either cited paragraph or the cited figure teaches or suggests new legal information responsive to a user's request. Nothing teaches or suggests accessing such information while previously accessed responsive items are displayed. And nothing teaches or suggests accessing such information "automatically and periodically", as claim 8 claims, or "automatically and continuously" as claim 9 claims.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Williamson fails to teach or suggest these limitations of claims 7–9, and that the rejection of these claims is erroneous for this additional reason. Claims 62 and 66–67 include limitations that correspond to the limitations of claims 7–9 discussed above, and the rejection of those claims is similarly incorrect. For these additional reasons, the Board is respectfully requested to reverse the rejections of claims 7–9, 62, and 66–67.

4. Claims 30 and 34–35

Independent claim 30 claims a method of processing legal information in the form of a plurality of documents, each of which comprises legal information relating to a plurality of legal topics, and independent claim 69 claims a computer program product comprising a computer-readable medium encoded with instructions that can cause a computer system to carry out such a method. It is respectfully submitted that Williamson fails to anticipate these claims because it fails to teach or suggest certain limitations that correspond to limitations discussed above, including "causing legal information associated with the identified documents to be provided for display on the display device, automatically tabulated by type according to the identifiers associated with the respective identified documents." Additionally, however, claims 30 and 69 claim "formatting the documents according to a protocol", and Williamson fails to teach or suggest this limitation as well.

The specification describes formatting "according to a protocol" as follows:

> Received documents are formatted according to a protocol, which specifies, for example, the format and content structure of the document and the document identifiers, the location within the content structure of the topic(s) and class(es) of the information, the source of the information, the time/date the information was received, and any other necessary or desired information, as well as the information content associated with the document and the manner in which the information content is included, e.g., as image data, text or hypertext data, or formatted document information such as a MICROSOFT WORD® file.

(p. 9, lines 1–8.) And also:

> At 216 collected documents are checked for compliance with the protocol established for use within the information system. The protocol can establish, for example, the format of the document data file or data set content (e.g., machine-readable header followed by image, hypertext, or program-specific data) and the format and order of any headers associated with the document. In the BLOOMBERG LEGAL™ Current Awareness system to be released by BLOOMBERG LP, it is envisioned that identifiers and other header material, and optionally document content as well, are to be formatted in XML, or Extensible Markup Language according to standards established by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

(p. 16, lines 3–11.) It is apparent that formatting according to a protocol means more than simply specifying that, e.g., XML be used to mark up a document, but includes specifying particular document structure and can include specifying particular content.

Williamson fails to teach or suggest anything that could correspond to formatting documents that comprise legal information according to a protocol. If the clauses or annotations are taken to be the documents, Williamson is silent as to the structure of individual clauses and annotations, writing only that clauses and annotations are stored in a database. (*E.g.*, ¶ 0042.)

In connection with this limitation of claims 30 and 69, the examiner cites Williamson at paragraph 0043. (Office Action at 9.) The paragraph discusses a "clause table", which "contains a collection of paragraphs and sentences". (¶ 0043.) It says nothing, however, about the content structure of any clause in the table. The reference in this paragraph to "fields" within a clause is not to be confused with a disclosure of such structure, because the paragraph says nothing about the format of the definition or representation of any such field.

Claims 34 and 35, which depend from claim 30, further illustrate the lack of disclosure in Williamson that could correspond to the claimed formatting of documents according to a protocol. Claim 34 claims checking formatted documents for compliance with such a protocol and generating a notice of defects when the document is found to be non-compliant, and claim 35 claims automatically formatting a non-complying document.

The examiner cites paragraph 0039 of Williamson in connection with these dependent claims (Office Action at 10), but this paragraph says only that Web pages can be written in HTML or XML. It is far from clear that a document in HTML or XML has inherently been formatted according to a protocol within the meaning of the present claims. More important, however, is that the examiner elsewhere suggests that the *clauses*, and not *Web pages*, correspond to the claimed documents. (Office Action at 9 (citing Williamson at ¶ 0043 for formatting documents according to a protocol).) Moreover, paragraph 0039 says nothing about checking a document for failure to comply with a protocol, generating a notice of defects, or formatting a document according to a protocol when it has been determined to be non-compliant.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Williamson fails to teach or suggest all limitations of claims 30, 34–35, and 69, and the Board is respectfully requested to reverse the rejections of these claims.

5. Claims 10–12 and 32–33

Claims 10–12 depend from independent claim 1, which has been shown above to be allowable over Williamson, and claims 32–33 depend from independent claim 30, which also has been shown above to be allowable over Williamson. Claims 10–12 and 32–33 are therefore allowable because they include allowable subject matter.

Additionally, however, these claims are separately allowable because they include limitations related to storing documents in more than one database. For example, claim 10 claims:

> 10. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of databases for storing the legal information, wherein the legal information is stored in separate databases by legal topic.

Claims 11 and 12 are similar, with claim 11 claiming storage in separate databases by type of legal information, and claim 12 claiming storage in separate databases by legal topic and by type of legal information. Claims 32 and 33 are similarly limited.

Williamson fails to teach or suggest more than one database. Figures 1 and 2 of Williamson show storage (18) containing a single database (19). And the discussion

consistently refers to a single database. (*See*, *e.g.*, Abstract ("A table of clauses is compiled into a sharable database."); ¶ 0013 ("A database including a table of individual clauses is maintained. . . . A list of authorizations is stored into the database. . . . A list of preferences is stored into the database.").) In fact, the plural "databases" does not appear anywhere in Williamson.

Moreover, by failing to teach or suggest more than one database, Williamson necessarily fails to teach or suggest using criteria such as the legal topic or the type of legal information to assign legal information to particular databases.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Williamson fails to teach or suggest all limitations of claims 10–12 and 32–33, and the Board is respectfully requested to reverse the rejections of these claims.

B. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all pending claims are in proper condition for allowance, and the Board is respectfully requested to overturn the examiner's rejection of these claims.

Date: 22 August 2011

Respectfully submitted,

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CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A system for providing legal information comprising associated items of legal information and content, the system comprising:

at least one computer and a plurality of user terminals which communicate over a network;

at least one database associated with the at least one computer storing the legal information in association with a plurality of legal topics and a plurality of types of legal information; and

a computer readable medium or media storing programming that causes the at least one computer to:

access within the at least one database a plurality of items of legal information responsive to a request received from a user terminal, each item of legal information being associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each topic tag identifying a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of legal information and each type tag identifying a type of legal information corresponding to the associated item of legal information; and

cause each item of legal information associated with the accessed information to be provided for display on a display

device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received, automatically tabulated by the respective type tags and configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of types of legal information comprises at least two of: administrative action, legislative action, rulemaking, reported judicial decisions, and news.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein causing each item of legal information to be provided for display comprises causing each item of legal information to be provided for display in a separate display window by type.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the plurality of types of legal information comprises at least two of: administrative action, legislative action, rulemaking, reported judicial decisions, court filings, news, and secondary materials.

5. The system of claim 3, wherein the plurality of types of legal information comprises at least: administrative action, legislative action, rulemaking, reported judicial decisions, court filings, news, and secondary materials.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of legal topics comprises at least two of: admiralty and maritime; alternative dispute resolution; antitrust; trade regulation; banking; finance; bankruptcy; business; commercial; consumer rights; corporate; business organizations; civil rights; collectibles and personal property; communications;

media; constitutional; construction; contracts; criminal; education; employment; labor; entertainment; gaming; sports; environmental; estates, trusts, and wills; family; government; elections and politics; government benefits; government contracts; government administration; state government; local government; health; human rights; immigration; insurance; intellectual property; copyrights; patents; trademarks; international; international trade; internet; litigation; litigation administration; appellate procedure; civil procedure; damages and remedies; evidence; mergers and acquisitions; military; natural resources; energy; native populations; professions and occupations; professional licensing; professional responsibility; products liability; real property; science and technology; securities; US federal taxation; state taxation; international taxation; torts; transportation; and workers' rights.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the programming causes the at least one computer to:

automatically access within the at least one database new legal information responsive to the request while each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information is provided for display on the display device; and

provide for display on the display device each item of legal information associated with the accessed new legal information together with each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information all tabulated by type.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the programming causes the at least one computer to:

automatically and periodically access the at least one database to determine whether new legal information responsive to the request is stored within the at least one database while each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information is provided for display on the display device; and

if new legal information responsive to the request is stored within the at least one database, provide for display on the display device each item of legal information associated with the new legal information, together with each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information all tabulated by type.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the programming causes the at least one computer to:

automatically and continually access the at least one database to determine whether new legal information responsive to the request is stored within the at least one database while each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information is provided for display on the display device; and

if new legal information responsive to the request is stored within the at least one database, provide for display on the display device each

item of legal information associated with the new legal information, together with each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information all tabulated by type.

10. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of databases for storing the legal information, wherein the legal information is stored in separate databases by legal topic.

11. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of databases for storing the legal information, wherein the legal information is stored in separate databases by type of legal information.

12. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of databases for storing the legal information, wherein the legal information is provided by a plurality of sources, and the legal information is stored in separate databases according to the source that provided the information.

13–15. (canceled)

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the programming causes the at least one computer to display on the display device tabulated by type each item of legal information provided for display.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein each item of legal information displayed on the display device is associated with a selectable link to the associated content, and wherein the programming causes the at least one computer to generate a request to retrieve the associated content from the at least one database in response to selection of a selectable link at the user terminal.

18. The system of claim 57, wherein the displayed content comprises a complete version of a document.

19. The system of claim 57, wherein the displayed content comprises an abbreviated version of a document.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the abbreviated version of a document comprises a summary of a document.

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the abbreviated version of a document comprises at least one redacted portion of a document.

22. The system of claim 57, wherein the displayed content comprises at least a partial image of a document.

23. The system of claim 57, wherein displayed content and a displayed item of information with which the displayed content is associated are displayed in different display windows.

24. The system of claim 57, wherein displayed content and a displayed item of information with which the displayed content is associated are displayed in different monitor screens.

25–29. (canceled)

30. A method of processing legal information, the method comprising:

assigning to each of a plurality of documents which each comprises legal information relating to a plurality of legal topics at least one

identifier associated with (a) at least one of the legal topics and (b) at least one of a plurality of types of legal information;

formatting the documents according to a protocol;

storing the formatted documents in at least one database;

using identifiers associated with the stored documents to identify documents within the at least one database responsive to a request received from a user terminal for information related to at least one of the plurality of legal topics; and

causing legal information associated with the identified documents to be provided for display on the display device, automatically tabulated by type according to the identifiers associated with the respective identified documents.

31. (canceled)

32. The method of claim 30, wherein documents are stored in a plurality of databases.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the documents are stored in the plurality of databases according to at least one of: the topics in relation to which the respective documents are stored, the types assigned to the documents, and a source of the documents.

34. The method of claim 30, comprising:

checking formatted documents for compliance with a document receiving protocol; and

generating a notice of defects automatically upon determination that a checked document does not comply with the protocol.

35. The method of claim 34, comprising automatically performing the assigning and formatting steps on the non-complying document.

36–55. (canceled)

56. The system of claim 16 wherein the programming stored on the computer readable medium or media causes the at least one computer to provide for display on the display device content associated with a displayed item of legal information in response to selection thereof at the user terminal.

57. The system of claim 56 wherein the programming stored on the computer readable medium or media causes the at least one computer to display on the display device the content provided for display.

58. A method for providing legal information comprising associated items of legal information and content in a system comprising at least one computer and a plurality of user terminals which communicate over a network, and at least one database associated with the at least one computer storing a plurality of items of legal information, each item of legal information being associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each topic tag identifying a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of legal information and each type tag identifying a type of legal

information corresponding to the associated item of legal information, the method comprising:

the at least one computer accessing within the at least one database legal information responsive to a request from a user terminal; and

the at least one computer providing for display on a display device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received each item of legal information associated with the accessed information, automatically tabulated by the respective type tag and configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item.

59. The method of claim 58, comprising the at least one computer displaying on the display device tabulated by type each item of legal information provided for display.

60. The method of claim 59, comprising the at least one computer providing for display on the display device content associated with a displayed item of legal information in response to selection thereof at the user terminal.

61. The method of claim 60, comprising the at least one computer displaying on the display device the content provided for display.

62. The method of claim 59, wherein displaying each item of legal information comprises displaying each item of legal information in a separate display window by type.

63. The method of claim 61, wherein displaying the content comprises displaying the content in a different display window than each associated displayed item.

64. The method of claim 61, wherein displaying the content comprises displaying the content in a different monitor screen than each associated displayed item.

65. The method of claim 59, wherein each item of legal information displayed on the display device is associated with a selectable link to the associated content, the method comprising generating a request to retrieve the associated content by selection of a selectable link at the user terminal.

66. The method of claim 58, comprising the at least one computer:

automatically accessing within the at least one database new legal information responsive to the request while providing for display each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information; and

providing for display on the display device each item of legal information associated with the accessed new legal information together with each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information all tabulated by type.

67. The method of claim 60, comprising the at least one computer:

automatically and periodically accessing the at least one database to determine whether new legal information responsive to the request is

stored within the at least one database while each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information is provided for display on the display device; and

if new legal information responsive to the request is stored within the at least one database, providing for display on the display device each item of legal information associated with the new legal information together with each item of legal information associated with the previously accessed legal information all tabulated by type.

68. A computer program product, comprising a computer program stored on a computer readable medium that causes a computer system to perform a method for providing legal information comprising associated items of legal information and content, the computer system comprising at least one computer and a plurality of user terminals which communicate over a network, and at least one database associated with the at least one computer storing a plurality of items of legal information, each item of legal information being associated with one or more respective topic tags and one or more respective type tags, each topic tag identifying a legal topic or subtopic associated with the associated item of legal information and each type tag identifying a type of legal information corresponding to the associated item of legal information, the method comprising:

the at least one computer accessing within the at least one database legal information responsive to a request from a user terminal; and

the at least one computer providing for display on a display device associated with the user terminal from which the request was received each item of legal information associated with the accessed information, automatically tabulated by the respective type tag and configured to be selectable at the user terminal to provide a request for display on the display device of the content associated with the selected item.

69. A computer program product, comprising a computer program stored on a computer readable medium that causes at least one computer to perform a method of processing legal information, the method comprising:

assigning to each of a plurality of documents which each comprises legal information relating to a plurality of legal topics, at least one identifier associated with (a) at least one of the legal topics and (b) at least one of a plurality of types of legal information;

formatting the documents according to a protocol;

storing the formatted documents in at least one database;

using identifiers associated with the stored documents to identify documents within the at least one database responsive to a request received from a user terminal for information related to at least one of the plurality of legal topics; and

causing legal information associated with the identified documents to be provided for display on the display device, automatically tabulated by type according to the identifiers associated with the respective identified documents.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.